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# Executive Summary

**T**he purpose of this Handbook is to assist Federal personnel, particularly those in contracting activities, in working with the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program. The JWOD Program is a mandatory source program created by the JWOD Act (41 U.S.C. 46-48c) and implemented through 41 CFR Chapter 51 and FAR Subpart 8.7. Under the JWOD Program, the Federal Government obtains needed commodities (also referred to as supplies) and services from nonprofit agencies employing persons who are legally blind or have other severe disabilities. Benefits to the Federal Government and the taxpayer include:

- ◆ High quality supplies and services
- ◆ On-time delivery
- ◆ Fair market prices, best value procurement
- ◆ Reduction of paperwork and pre/post-award costs through long-term contracts
- ◆ Central points of contact that solve problems, facilitate action
- ◆ Reduced disability payments and increased tax revenues

The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is responsible for administering the JWOD Program. An **independent Federal agency** consisting of 15 Presidentially appointed members and a small staff, the “Committee” determines which supplies and services are suitable for provision by nonprofit agencies and establishes the prices to be paid for them by the Federal Government. Technical assistance to match nonprofit agency capabilities with Government requirements is rendered by NIB and NISH, private nonprofit organizations designated by the Committee.

Throughout the “JWOD Process” (Identification, Development, Committee Review/Decision, and Production/Performance), Federal personnel, particularly those in contracting activities, play an extremely important role in assuring the success of the Program. This Handbook is intended to provide them with guidance regarding their role as members of the JWOD team. Only through the combined efforts of all members of the team will the Program achieve its dual goals of meeting Federal procurement needs and generating employment and training opportunities for Americans who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

The JWOD Program, while promoting a desirable social end, represents good business for the Federal Government – quality supplies and services, delivered on time at fair market prices.

*In the context of this Handbook, the term “contracting activities” applies to all Federal agencies, central and local, that procure products or services for the Government.*



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# The Javits–Wagner–O’Day Act: Historical Perspective

## 1938:

**Passage of Wagner-O’Day Act, which created the Committee on Purchases of Blind-Made Products to help generate employment opportunities for persons who are blind.**

## 1971:

**Javits-Wagner-O’Day (JWOD) Act passed, adding persons with other severe disabilities and giving both groups the chance to provide needed products and services to the Federal Government.**



**Statutory Authority:**  
**U.S. Code (41 U.S.C. 46–48c)**

**Implementing Guidance:**  
**Code of Federal Regulations (41 CFR Ch. 51) and Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR Subpart 8.7)**

**E**nacted in 1938, the Wagner-O’Day Act was designed to promote a desirable socioeconomic goal by using the tremendous purchasing power of the Federal Government as a catalyst in employing persons who are blind. The law established the Committee on Purchases of Blind-Made Products and provided long-term work opportunities by mandating that all Federal agencies buy specified supplies made in nonprofit agencies employing such individuals.

In 1971, Senator Jacob Javits spearheaded efforts to expand the Act. The resulting Javits-Wagner-O’Day (JWOD) Act (41 U.S.C. 46-48c) permitted nonprofit agencies serving people with “other” severe disabilities to participate in the mandatory source Program and authorized nonprofit agencies to furnish not only supplies, but also services to the Government.

Under the new Act, the Federal agency charged with administering the Program was again structured as a Committee. That agency—currently known as the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (Committee)—was charged with deciding which commodities and services should be purchased by the Federal Government under the JWOD Program; determining the **fair market price** for those commodities and services; revising the prices in accordance with changing market conditions; and establishing rules needed to administer the Program. The Committee has designated two central nonprofit agencies—**National Industries for the Blind (NIB)** and **NISH**—to facilitate the distribution of orders among nonprofit agencies participating in the JWOD Program. NIB works with agencies that primarily serve people who are blind, while NISH works with agencies that serve individuals with a range of severe disabilities.

The Program is established by the JWOD Act, with implementing guidance in the Code of Federal Regulations (41 CFR Chapter 51) and the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR Subpart 8.7). The Committee maintains a **Procurement List** of commodities and services which are mandated for purchase from nonprofit agencies serving people who are blind or have other severe disabilities. This List is modified almost every week, with changes reported in the *Federal Register*. The appropriate contracting activity is notified whenever a supply or service is added to the **Procurement List** and works with the Committee to ensure that in the future the item is purchased from the designated nonprofit agency(ies).

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**For Working with the Committee for Purchase  
From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled,  
NIB and NISH**

**Third Edition**

**COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM PEOPLE  
WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED**

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# Nonprofit Agencies Participating in the JWOD Program

